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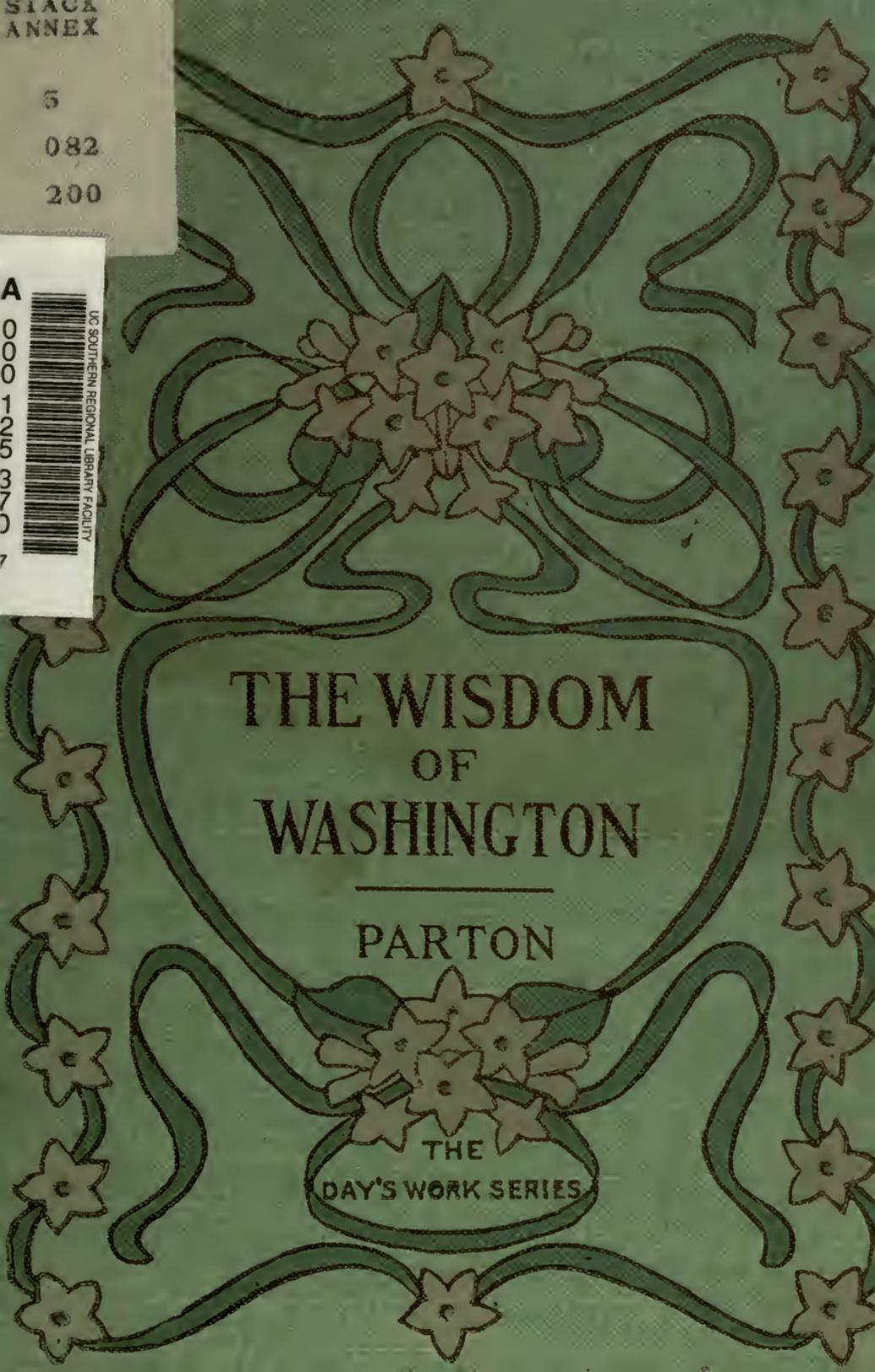
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THE WISDOM
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THE
DAY'S WORK SERIES

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THE WISDOM OF WASHINGTON

The Day's Work Series

THE WISDOM OF WASHINGTON

President of the United States

SELECTED BY
JAMES PARTON



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THE
CHARACTER OF GEORGE WASHINGTON,
AS DELINEATED BY THOMAS JEFFERSON.



THINK I knew General Washington intimately and thoroughly ; and were I called on to delineate his character, it should be in terms like these.

His mind was great and powerful, without being of the very first order ; his penetration strong, though not so acute as that of a Newton, Bacon, or Locke ; and, as far as he saw, no judgment was ever sounder. It was slow in operation, being little aided by invention or imagination, but sure in conclusion. Hence the common remark of his officers of the advantage he derived from councils of war, where, hearing all suggestions, he selected whatever was best ; and certainly no general ever planned his battles more judiciously. But if deranged during the course of the action, if any member of his plan was dislocated by sudden circumstances, he was slow in readjustment. The consequence was that he often failed in the field, and rarely against an enemy in station, as at Bos-

ton and York. He was incapable of fear, meeting personal dangers with the calmest unconcern. Perhaps the strongest feature in his character was prudence, never acting until every circumstance, every consideration, was maturely weighed; refraining if he saw a doubt, but, when once decided, going through with his purpose, whatever obstacles opposed. His integrity was most pure, his justice the most inflexible I have ever known, no motives of interest or consanguinity, of friendship or hatred, being able to bias his decision. He was, indeed, in every sense of the words, a wise, a good, and a great man. His temper was naturally irritable and high-toned; but reflection and resolution had obtained a firm and habitual ascendancy over it. If ever, however, it broke its bonds, he was most tremendous in his wrath. In his expenses he was honorable, but exact; liberal in contributions to whatever promised utility; but frowning and unyielding on all visionary projects and all unworthy calls on his charity. His heart was not warm in its affections; but he exactly calculated every man's value, and gave him a solid esteem proportioned to it. His person, you know, was fine, his stature exactly what one would wish, deportment easy, erect, and noble; the best horseman of his age, and the most graceful figure that could be seen on horseback. Although in the circle of his friends, where he might be unreserved with safety, he took a free share in conversation, his colloquial talents were not above mediocrity, possessing neither copiousness of ideas nor fluency of words. In public, when called on for a sudden opinion, he

was unready, short, and embarrassed. Yet he wrote readily, rather diffusely, in an easy and correct style. This he had acquired by conversation with the world, for his education was merely reading, writing, and common arithmetic, to which he added surveying at a later day. His time was employed in action chiefly, reading little, and that only in agriculture and English history. His correspondence became necessarily extensive, and, with journalizing his agricultural proceedings, occupied most of his leisure hours within doors. On the whole, his character was, in its mass, perfect, in nothing bad, in few points indifferent; and it may truly be said, that never did nature and fortune combine more perfectly to make a man great, and to place him in the same constellation with whatever worthies have merited from man an everlasting remembrance. For his was the singular destiny and merit of leading the armies of his country successfully through an arduous war for the establishment of its independence; of conducting its councils through the birth of a government, new in its forms and principles, until it had settled down into a quiet and orderly training, and of scrupulously obeying the laws through the whole of his career, civil and military, of which the world furnishes no other example.

To DOCTOR WALTER JONES, January 2, 1814.
6 Jefferson's Works, 286.



THE
WISDOM OF WASHINGTON,
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

1. VIRTUE AND HAPPINESS.



HERE is no truth more thoroughly established, than that there exists, in the economy and course of nature, an indissoluble union between virtue and happiness, between duty and advantage, between the genuine maxims of an honest and magnanimous policy and the solid rewards of public prosperity and felicity.

*Inaugural Speech to both Houses of Congress, April 30, 1789.
12 Sparks, 4.*

2. IMPORTANCE OF OUR EXPERIMENT IN GOVERNMENT.



THE preservation of the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the republican model of government, are justly considered as *deeply*, perhaps as *finally*, staked on the experiment intrusted to the hands of the American people.

To the same, same date. 12 Sparks, 4.

3. HIS FEELING UPON RE-ENTERING PUBLIC LIFE.



WHEN I had judged, upon the best appreciation I was able to form of the circumstances which related to myself, that it was my duty to embark again on the tempestuous ocean of public life, I gave up all expectations of private happiness in this world. You know, my dear sir, I had concentrated all my schemes, all my views, all my wishes, within the narrow circle of domestic enjoyment.

Though I flatter myself the world will do me the justice to believe, that, at my time of life and in my circumstances, nothing but a conviction of duty could have induced me to depart from my resolution of remaining in retirement, yet I greatly apprehend that my countrymen will expect too much from me. I fear, if the issue of public measures should not correspond with their sanguine expectations, they will turn the extravagant, and I might almost say undue, praises which they are heaping upon me at this moment into equally extravagant, though I will fondly hope unmerited censures.

So much is expected, so many untoward circumstances may intervene, in such a new and critical situation, that I feel an insuperable diffidence in my own abilities. I feel in the execution of the duties of my arduous office how much I shall stand in need of the countenance and aid of every friend to myself, of every friend to the revolution, and of every lover of good government.

To EDWARD RUTLEDGE, May 5, 1789. 10 *Sparks*, 1.

4. PRESIDENTIAL ETIQUETTE.



WHILE the eyes of America, perhaps of the world, are turned to this government, and many are watching the movements of all those who are concerned in its administration, I should like to be informed, through so good a medium, of the public opinion of both men and measures, and of none more than myself; not so much of what may be thought commendable parts, if any, of my conduct, as of those which are conceived to be of a different complexion. The man who means to commit no wrong will never be guilty of enormities; consequently he can never be unwilling to learn what are ascribed to him as foibles. If they are really such, the knowledge of them in a well-disposed mind will go half-way towards a reform. If they are not errors, he can explain and justify the motives of his actions.

At a distance from the theatre of action, truth is not always related without embellishment, and sometimes is entirely perverted, from a misconception of the causes which produce the effects that are the subjects of censure. This leads me to think that the system which I found it indispensably necessary to adopt on my first coming to this city might have undergone severe strictures, and have had motives very foreign from those that govern me assigned as causes thereof. I mean, first, returning no visits; secondly, appointing certain days to receive them generally, not to the exclusion, however, of visits on any other days under

particular circumstances ; and, thirdly, at first entertaining no company, and afterwards (until I was unable to entertain any at all) confining it to official characters. A few days evinced the necessity of the two first in so clear a point of view, that, had I not adopted it, I should have been unable to attend to any sort of business, unless I had applied the hours allotted to rest and refreshment to this purpose ; for by the time I had done breakfast, and thence till dinner, and afterwards till bedtime, I could not get relieved from the ceremony of one visit, before I had to attend to another. In a word, I had no leisure to read or to answer the despatches that were pouring in upon me from all quarters.

With respect to the third matter, I early received information, through very respectable channels, that the adoption thereof was not less essential than that of the other two, if the President was to preserve the dignity and respect that were due to the first magistrate. For a contrary conduct had involved the late presidents of Congress in insuperable difficulties, and the office, in this respect, in perfect contempt ; for the table was considered as a public one, and every person who could get introduced conceived that he had a right to be invited to it. This, although the table was always crowded (and with mixed company, and the President considered in no better light than as a *maître d'hôtel*), was in its nature impracticable, and as many offences given as if no table had been kept.

The citizens of this place were well acquainted

with this fact, and the principal members of Congress in both Houses were so well convinced of the impropriety and degrading situation of their President, that it was the general opinion that the President of the United States should neither give nor receive invitations ; some from a belief, independent of the circumstances I have mentioned, that this was fundamentally right, in order to acquire respect. But to this I had two objections, both powerful in my mind : first, the novelty of it I knew would be considered as an ostentatious mimicry of sovereignty ; and, secondly, that so great a seclusion would have stopped the avenues to useful information from the many, and made me more dependent on that of the few. But to hit on a discriminating medium was found more difficult than it appeared to be at first view ; for, if the citizens at large were begun with, no line could be drawn ; all of decent appearance would expect to be invited, and I should have been plunged at once into the evil I was endeavoring to avoid. Upon the whole, it was thought best to confine my invitations to official characters and strangers of distinction. This line I have hitherto pursued. Whether it may be found best to adhere to it, or depart from it, must in some measure be the result of experience and information.

So strongly had the citizens of this place imbibed an idea of the impropriety of my accepting invitations to dinner, that I have not received one from any family (though they are remarkable for hospitality, and though I have received every civility and attention possible from them) since I came to

the city, except to dine with the governor on the day of my arrival ; so that, if this should be adduced as an article of impeachment, there can be at least one good reason adduced for my not dining out ; to wit, never having been asked to do so.

To DAVID STUART, July 26, 1789. 10 *Sparks*, 17.

5. ON BEING ASKED TO APPOINT A NEPHEW TO OFFICE.



YOU cannot doubt my wishes to see you appointed to any office of honor or emolument, in the new government, to the duties of which you are competent ; but, however deserving you may be of the one you have suggested, your standing at the bar would not justify my nomination of you as attorney to the federal District Court in preference to some of the oldest and most esteemed general court lawyers in your own State, who are desirous of this appointment. My political conduct in nominations, even if I were uninfluenced by principle, must be exceedingly circumspect and proof against just criticism ; for the eyes of Argus are upon me, and no slip will pass unnoticed, that can be improved into a supposed partiality for friends or relations.

To BUSHROD WASHINGTON, July 27, 1789. 10 *Sparks*, 24.

6. THE DEATH OF HIS MOTHER.



AWFUL and affecting as the death of a parent is, there is consolation in knowing that Heaven has spared ours to an age beyond which few attain, and favored her

with the full enjoyment of her mental faculties, and as much bodily strength as usually falls to the lot of fourscore. Under these considerations, and a hope that she is translated to a happier place, it is the duty of her relatives to yield due submission to the decrees of the Creator. When I was last at Fredericksburg, I took a final leave of my mother, never expecting to see her more.

To MRS. BETTY LEWIS, September 13, 1789. 10 *Sparks*, 31.

7. HIS LAST LETTER TO DR. FRANKLIN.



HE affectionate congratulations on the recovery of my health, and the warm expressions of personal friendship which were contained in your letter of the 16th instant, claim my gratitude. And the consideration that it was written when you were afflicted with a painful malady greatly increases my obligation for it.*

* *Dr. Franklin's Letter.*

"PHILADELPHIA, 16 September, 1789.

"DEAR SIR,—My malady renders my sitting up to write rather painful to me; but I cannot let my son-in-law, Mr. Bache, part for New York, without congratulating you by him on the recovery of your health, so precious to us all; and on the growing strength of our new government under your administration. For my own personal ease, I should have died two years ago; but, though those years have been spent in excruciating pain, I am pleased that I have lived them, since they have brought me to see our present situation. I am now finishing my eighty-fourth year, and probably with it my career in this life; but in whatever state of existence I am placed hereafter, if I retain any memory of what has passed here, I shall with it retain the esteem, respect, and affection, with which I have long been, my dear friend,

"Yours most sincerely,
"B. FRANKLIN."

Would to God, my dear sir, that I could congratulate you upon the removal of that excruciating pain under which you labor, and that your existence might close with as much ease to yourself as its continuance has been beneficial to our country and useful to mankind; or if the united wishes of a free people, joined with the earnest prayers of every friend to science and humanity, could relieve the body from pains or infirmities, that you could claim an exemption on this score. But this cannot be, and you have within yourself the only resource to which we can confidently apply for relief, a philosophic mind.

If to be venerated for benevolence, if to be admired for talents, if to be esteemed for patriotism, if to be beloved for philanthropy, can gratify the human mind, you must have the pleasing consolation to know that you have not lived in vain. And I flatter myself that it will not be ranked among the least grateful occurrences of your life to be assured, that, so long as I retain my memory, you will be recollected with respect, veneration, and affection by your sincere friend.

September 23, 1789. 10 *Sparks*, 32.

8. MAN NOT RESPONSIBLE TO MAN FOR HIS FAITH.



WHILE men perform their social duties faithfully, they do all that society or the state can with propriety demand or expect; and remain responsible only to their Maker for the religion, or modes of faith, which they may prefer or profess.

Address to the Quakers, October, 1789. 405 *Sparks*, 12.

9. HIS EARLY DISTRUST OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.



HE revolution which has been effected in France is of so wonderful a nature that the mind can hardly realize the fact. If it ends as our last accounts, to the first of August, predict, that nation will be the most powerful and happy in Europe ; but I fear, though it has gone triumphantly through the first paroxysm, it is not the last it has to encounter before matters are finally settled. In a word, the revolution is of too great a magnitude to be effected in so short a space, and with the loss of so little blood. The mortification of the king, the intrigues of the queen, and the discontent of the princes and noblesse, will foment divisions, if possible, in the National Assembly ; and they will unquestionably avail themselves of every *faux pas* in the formation of the constitution, if they do not give a more open, active opposition. In addition to these, the licentiousness of the people on one hand, and sanguinary punishments on the other, will alarm the best-disposed friends to the measure, and contribute not a little to the overthrow of their object. Great temperance, firmness, and foresight are necessary in the movements of that body. To forbear running from one extreme to another is no easy matter ; and, should this be the case, rocks and shelves, not visible at present, may wreck the vessel, and give a higher toned despotism than the one which existed before.

To GOUVERNEUR MORRIS, October 13, 1789.
10 *Sparks*, 39.

10. TO THE FATHER OF TWO PRETTY GIRLS WHO HAD WAITED UPON HIM.

EING informed that you have given my name to one of your sons, and called another after Mrs. Washington's family, and being moreover very much pleased with the modest and innocent looks of your two daughters, Patty and Polly, I do for these reasons send each of these girls a piece of chintz; and to Patty, who bears the name of Mrs. Washington, and who waited more upon us than Polly did, I send five guineas, with which she may buy herself any little ornaments she may want, or she may dispose of them in any other manner more agreeable to herself. As I do not give these things with a view to have it talked of, or even to its being known, the less there is said about the matter, the better you will please me; but, that I may be sure the chintz and money have got safe to hand, let Patty, who I dare say is equal to it, write me a line informing me thereof, directed to "The President of the United States at New York." I wish you and your family well, and am your humble servant.

November 8, 1789. 10 *Sparks*, 48.

11. APPOINTMENT TO OFFICE.

EVERY nomination to office I have endeavored, as far as my own knowledge extended, or information could be obtained, to make fitness of character my primary object. If with this the peculiar necessi-

ties of the candidate could be combined, it has been with me an additional inducement to the appointment.

To JOSEPH JONES, November 30, 1789. 10 *Sparks*, 57.

12. PREPARATIONS FOR WAR.



FREE people ought not only to be armed, but disciplined; to which end a uniform and well-digested plan is requisite.

Speech to both Houses of Congress, January 8, 1790.
12 *Sparks*, 8.

13. HIS OPINION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT.



HAT the government, though not actually perfect, is one of the best in the world, I have little doubt. I always believed that an unequivocally free and equal representation of the people in the Legislature, together with an efficient and responsible Executive, was the great pillar on which the preservation of American freedom must depend.

To CATHARINE MACAULAY GRAHAM, January 9, 1790.
10 *Sparks*, 70.

14. UPON HIS BEING ACCUSED OF PRIDE.



IN a letter of last year, to the best of my recollection, I informed you of the motives which *compelled* me to allot a day for the reception of idle and ceremonious visits (for it never has prevented those of sociability and friendship in the afternoon, or at any

other time); but if I am mistaken in this, the history of this business is simply and shortly as follows. Before the custom was established, which now accommodates foreign characters, strangers, and others, who, from motives of curiosity, respect to the Chief Magistrate, or any other cause, are induced to call upon me, I was unable to attend to any business whatsoever; for gentlemen, consulting their own convenience rather than mine, were calling from the time I rose from breakfast, often before, until I sat down to dinner. This, as I resolved not to neglect my public duties, reduced me to the choice of one of these alternatives, either to refuse them altogether, or to appropriate a time for the reception of them. The former would, I well knew, be disgusting to many; the latter I expected would undergo animadversion and blazoning from those who would find fault *with* or *without* cause. To please everybody was impossible. I therefore adopted that line of conduct which combined public advantage with private convenience, and which in my judgment was unexceptionable in itself. That I have not been able to make bows to the taste of poor Colonel B. (who, by the by, I believe never saw one of them) is to be regretted, especially too, as, upon those occasions, they were indiscriminately bestowed, and the best I was master of. Would it not have been better to throw the veil of charity over them, ascribing their stiffness to the effects of age, or to the unskilfulness of my teacher, rather than to pride and dignity of office, which God knows has no charms for me? For I can truly say, I had

rather be at Mount Vernon, with a friend or two about me, than to be attended at the seat of government by the officers of state and the representatives of every power in Europe.

These visits are optional. They are made without invitation. Between the hours of three and four every Tuesday I am prepared to receive them. Gentlemen, often in great numbers, come and go, chat with each other, and act as they please. A porter shows them into the room, and they retire from it when they please, and without ceremony. At their first entrance, they salute me, and I them, and as many as I can talk to, I do. What pomp there is in all this, I am unable to discover. Perhaps it consists in not sitting. To this, two reasons are opposed : first, it is unusual ; secondly, which is a more substantial one, because I have no room large enough to contain a third of the chairs which would be sufficient to admit it. If it is supposed that ostentation, or the fashions of courts (which, by the by, I believe originate oftener in convenience, not to say necessity, than is generally imagined), gave rise to this custom, I will boldly affirm that no supposition was ever more erroneous ; for, if I were to give indulgence to my inclinations, every moment that I could withdraw from the fatigue of my station should be spent in retirement. That it is not, proceeds from the sense I entertain of the propriety of giving to every one as free access as consists with that respect which is due to the chair of government ; and that respect, I conceive, is neither to be acquired nor preserved but by

observing a just medium between much state and too great familiarity.

Similar to the above, but of a more sociable kind, are the visits every Friday afternoon to Mrs. Washington, where I always am. These public meetings, and a dinner once a week to as many as my table will hold, with the references to and from the different departments of state, and other communications with all parts of the Union, are as much if not more than I am able to undergo; for I have already had, within less than a year, two severe attacks, the last worse than the first. A third, more than probably, will put me to sleep with my fathers. At what distance this may be I know not. Within the last twelve months I have undergone more and severer sickness than thirty preceding years afflicted me with.

To DAVID STUART, June 15, 1790. 10 *Sparks*, 99.

15. WASHINGTON AS A LANDLORD.



FROM long experience I have laid it down as an unerring maxim, that to exact rents with punctuality is not only the *right* of the landlord, but that it is also for the benefit of the tenant that it should be so, unless by providential and uncontrollable events the latter is rendered unable to pay them. In such cases, he should not only meet with indulgence, but in some instances with a remittal of the rent. But in the ordinary course of these transactions, the rents ought to be collected with the most rigid exactness, especially from my

tenants, who do not, for most of the farms, pay a fourth of what the tenements would let for if they were now in my possession. If it is found difficult for a tenant to pay *one* rent, it is more difficult for him to pay *two*. When *three* are due he despairs, or cares little about them; and if they run to a greater number, it is highly probable, that, to avoid paying any, he will leave you the bag to hold. For these reasons, except under the circumstances before mentioned, it is my desire that you will give all the tenants timely notice that you will grant no indulgences beyond those allowed by the covenants in the leases. If they find you *strict*, they will be *punctual*; if otherwise, your trouble will be quadrupled, and I can have no dependence upon my rents, which are now my principal support.

To ROBERT LEWIS, October 15, 1791. 10 *Sparks*, 198.

16. ADVICE TO A YOUNG ORPHAN NIECE.



OCUPIED as my time now is, and must be during the sitting of Congress, I nevertheless will endeavor to inculcate upon your mind the delicacy and danger of that period to which you are now arrived under peculiar circumstances. You are just entering into the state of womanhood, without the watchful eye of a mother to admonish, or the protecting aid of a father to advise and defend you; you may not be sensible that you are at this moment about to be stamped with that character which will adhere to you through life; the consequences of which you have not perhaps attended to, but be

assured it is of the utmost importance that you should.

Your cousins, with whom you live, are well qualified to give you advice ; and I am sure they will, if you are disposed to receive it. But, if you are disobliging, self-willed, and untowardly, it is hardly to be expected that they will engage themselves in unpleasant disputes with you, especially Fanny, whose mild and placid temper will not permit her to exceed the limits of wholesome admonition or gentle rebuke. Think, then, to what dangers a giddy girl of fifteen or sixteen must be exposed in circumstances like these. To be under but little or no control may be pleasing to a mind that does not reflect, but this pleasure cannot be of long duration ; and reason, too late perhaps, may convince you of the folly of misspending time. You are not to learn, I am certain, that your fortune is small. Supply the want of it, then, with a well-cultivated mind, with dispositions to industry and frugality, with gentleness of manners, an obliging temper, and such qualifications as will attract notice, and recommend you to a happy establishment for life.

You might, instead of associating with those from whom you can derive nothing that is good, but may have observed everything that is deceitful, lying, and bad, become the intimate companion of, and aid to, your cousin in the domestic concerns of the family. Many girls, before they have arrived at your age, have been found so trustworthy as to take the whole trouble of a family from their mothers ; but it is by a steady and rigid

attention to the rules of propriety that such confidence is obtained, and nothing would give me more pleasure than to hear that you had acquired it. The merits and benefits of it would redound more to your advantage in your progress through life, and to the person with whom you may in due time form a matrimonial connection, than to any others ; but to none would such a circumstance afford more real satisfaction than to your affectionate uncle.

To HARRIOT WASHINGTON, October 30, 1791.
10 *Sparks*, 201.

17. UPON THE ESTRANGEMENT OF JEFFERSON AND HAMILTON.

HOW unfortunate, and how much to be regretted is it, then, that, while we are encompassed on all sides with avowed enemies and insidious friends, internal dissensions should be harrowing and tearing our vitals ! The latter, to me, is the most serious, the most alarming, and the most afflicting of the two ; and without more charity for the opinions and acts of one another in governmental matters, or some more infallible criterion by which the truth of speculative opinions, before they have undergone the test of experience, are to be forejudged, than has yet fallen to the lot of fallibility, I believe it will be difficult, if not impracticable, to manage the reins of government, or to keep the parts of it together ; for if, instead of laying our shoulders to the machine after measures are decided on, one pulls this way and another that, before the utility of the thing is fairly tried, it must inevitably be torn

asunder ; and in my opinion, the fairest prospect of happiness and prosperity that ever was presented to man will be lost perhaps forever.

My earnest wish and my fondest hope, therefore, is, that, instead of wounding suspicions and irritating charges, there may be liberal allowances, mutual forbearances, and temporizing yieldings on all sides. Under the exercise of these, matters will go on smoothly, and, if possible, more prosperously. Without them, everything must rub ; the wheels of government will clog ; our enemies will triumph, and, by throwing their weight into the disaffected scale, may accomplish the ruin of the goodly fabric we have been erecting.

I do not mean to apply this advice, or these observations, to any particular person or character. I have given them in the same general terms to other officers of the government ; because the disagreements which have arisen from difference of opinions, and the attacks which have been made upon almost all the measures of government, and most of its executive officers, have for a long time past filled me with painful sensations, and cannot fail, I think, of producing unhappy consequences at home and abroad.

To THOMAS JEFFERSON, *Secretary of State*, August 23, 1792.
10 *Sparks*, 280.

18. THE SAME SUBJECT.



DIFFERENCES in political opinion are as unavoidable, as, to a certain point, they may be necessary ; but it is exceedingly to be regretted that subjects cannot be

discussed with temper on the one hand, or decisions submitted to without having the motives which led to them improperly implicated on the other; and this regret borders on chagrin, when we find that men of abilities, zealous patriots, having the same *general* objects in view, and the same upright intentions to prosecute them, will not exercise more charity in deciding on the opinions and actions of one another. When matters get to such lengths, the natural inference is, that both sides have strained the cords beyond their bearing, and that a middle course would be found the best, until experience shall have decided on the right way, or (which is not to be expected, because it is denied to mortals) there shall be some infallible rule by which we could forejudge events.

Having premised these things, I would fain hope that liberal allowances will be made for the political opinions of each other; and, instead of those wounding suspicions and irritating charges with which some of our gazettes are so strongly impregnated, and which cannot fail, if persevered in, of pushing matters to extremity, and thereby tearing the machine asunder, that there may be mutual forbearance and temporizing yielding *on all sides*. Without these, I do not see how the reins of government are to be managed, or how the Union of the States can be much longer preserved.

How unfortunate would it be, if a fabric so goodly, erected under so many providential circumstances, and in its first stages having acquired such respectability, should, from diversity of sentiments, or internal obstructions to some of the

acts of government (for I cannot prevail on myself to believe that these measures are as yet the deliberate acts of a determined party), be brought to the verge of dissolution. Melancholy thought! But, at the same time that it shows the consequences of diversified opinions, when pushed with too much tenacity, it exhibits evidence also of the necessity of accommodation, and of the propriety of adopting such healing measures as may restore harmony to the discordant members of the Union, and the governing powers of it.

I do not mean to apply this advice to any measures which are passed, or to any particular character. I have given it in the same *general* terms to other officers of the government. My earnest wish is, that balsam may be poured into *all* the wounds, which have been given, to prevent them from gangrening, and from those fatal consequences which the community may sustain if it is withheld.

To ALEXANDER HAMILTON, *Secretary of the Treasury*,
August 26, 1792. 10 *Sparks*, 283.

19. PUTTING IT TO THE TEST.



LIKELY young man in Alexandria, of the name of Turner, has been strongly recommended to me for an ensigncy. It is said, among other things in his favor, that a number of young country-born men would enlist under him. I have answered, Let him ascertain that fact, and then apply with the list of them.

To HENRY KNOX, *Secretary of War*, September 24, 1792.
10 *Sparks*, 249.

20. HAMILTON AND JEFFERSON AGAIN.



REGRET, deeply regret, the difference in opinions, which have arisen and divided you and another principal officer of the government; and I wish devoutly there could be an accommodation of them by mutual yieldings.

A measure of this sort would produce harmony and consequent good in our public councils. The contrary will inevitably introduce confusion and serious mischiefs; and for what? Because mankind cannot think alike, but would adopt different means to attain the same ends. For I will frankly and solemnly declare, that I believe the views of both of you to be pure and well meant, and that experience only will decide, with respect to the salutariness of the measures which are the subjects of dispute. Why, then, when some of the best citizens in the United States, men of discernment, uniform and tried patriots, who have no sinister views to promote, but are chaste in their ways of thinking and acting, are to be found, some on one side and some on the other of the questions which have caused these agitations, should either of you be so tenacious of your opinions as to make no allowances for those of the other? I could and indeed was about to add more on this interesting subject, but will forbear, at least for the present, after expressing a wish that the cup which has been presented to us may not be snatched from our lips by a discordance of action, when I am persuaded there is no discord-

ance in your views. I have a great, a sincere esteem and regard for you both, and ardently wish that some line may be marked out by which both of you could walk.

To THOMAS JEFFERSON, *Secretary of State*, October 18, 1792.
10 *Sparks*, 306.

21. HIS GUIDING PRINCIPLE AS PRESIDENT.



ONLY wish, whilst I am a servant of the public, to know the will of my masters, that I may govern myself accordingly.

To EDMUND PENDLETON, September 23, 1793.
10 *Sparks*, 371.

22. UPON AN IMPROVED THRESHING-MACHINE.



THE model brought over by the English farmers may be a good one, but the utility of it among careless negroes and ignorant overseers will depend absolutely upon the simplicity of the construction; for, if there is anything complex in the machinery, it will be no longer in use than a mushroom is in existence. I have seen so much of the beginning and ending of new inventions, that I have almost resolved to go on in the old way of treading, until I get settled again at home, and can attend myself to the management of one. As a proof in point of the almost impossibility of putting the overseers of this country out of the track they have been accustomed to walk in, I have one of

the most convenient barns in this or perhaps any other country, where thirty hands may with great ease be employed in threshing. Half of the wheat of the farm was actually stowed in this barn in the straw, by my order, for threshing; notwithstanding, when I came home about the middle of September, I found a treading-yard not thirty feet from the barn-door, the wheat again brought out of the barn, and horses treading it out in an open exposure, liable to the vicissitudes of weather. I am now erecting a building for the express purpose of treading. I have sanguine expectations of its utility; and, if I am not deceived in them, it may afford you some satisfaction, when you come into this part of the country, to call and look at it.

To HENRY LEE, *Governor of Virginia*, October 16, 1793.
10 Sparks, 382.

23. NEWSPAPERS.



CANNOT forbear to recommend a repeal of the tax on transportation of public prints. There is no resource so firm for the government of the United States as the affections of the people, guided by an enlightened policy; and to this primary good nothing can conduce more than a faithful representation of public proceedings, diffused without restraint throughout the United States.

Speech to both Houses of Congress, December 3, 1793.
12 Sparks, 42.

24. RENT OF LAND THEN.



WOULD let these four farms to four substantial farmers, of wealth and strength sufficient to cultivate them, and who would insure to me the regular payment of the rents; and I would give them leases for seven or ten years, at the rate of a Spanish milled dollar, or other money current at the time in this country equivalent thereto, for every acre of ploughable and mowable ground, within the enclosures of the respective farms, as marked in the plan; and would allow the tenants, during that period, to take fuel, and use timber from the woodland to repair the buildings, and to keep the fences in order until live fences could be substituted in place of dead ones; but, in this case, no sub-tenants would be allowed.

To ARTHUR YOUNG, December 12, 1793. 12 *Sparks*, 309.

25. HIS AID TO THE VICTIMS OF THE YELLOW FEVER
IN PHILADELPHIA.

T has been my intention, ever since my return to the city, to contribute my mite towards the relief of the *most* needy inhabitants of it. The pressure of public business hitherto has suspended, but not altered, my resolution. I am at a loss, however, for whose benefit to apply the little I can give, and in whose hands to place it; whether for the use of the fatherless children and widows, made so by the late calamity, who may find it difficult, whilst

provisions, wood, and other necessaries are so dear, to support themselves, or to other and better purposes, if any, I know not, and therefore have taken the liberty of asking your advice.

To WILLIAM WHITE, *Bishop of Pennsylvania*
December 31, 1793. 10 *Sparks*, 398.

26. APPOINTMENTS TO OFFICE.

OEVAL with my inauguration I resolved firmly that no man should ever charge me *justly* with deception. Abundant reason I have had to rejoice at this determination; for I have experienced the necessity, in a variety of instances, of hardening my heart against indulgences of my warmest inclination and friendship, and, from a combination of causes, as well as mere fitness of character, to depart from first impressions and first intentions with regard to nominations; which has proved most unequivocally the propriety of the maxim I had adopted, of never committing myself until the moment the appointment is to be made, when, from the best information I can obtain, and a full view of circumstances, my judgment is formed.

To JAMES MCHENRY, April 8, 1794. 10 *Sparks*, 397.

27. PRICE OF WILD LAND.

Y land on the Ohio and Great Kenhawa Rivers, amounting to 32,373 acres, was once sold for sixty-five thousand French crowns to a French gentleman, who was very competent to the payment at the time the

contract was made; but, getting a little embarrassed in his finances by the revolution in his country, by mutual agreement the bargain was cancelled. Lately I have been in treaty for the same land at three dollars and a third per acre for the whole quantity.

To PRESLEY NEVILLE, June 16, 1794. 12 *Sparks*, 317.

28. THE PRESIDENT IS SARCASTIC TOUCHING THE NEWSPAPERS.



HE affairs of this country *cannot go amiss*. There are *so many watchful guardians of them*, and such *infallible guides*, that one is at no loss for a director at every turn.

To GOUVERNEUR MORRIS, June 25, 1794. 10 *Sparks*, 417.

29. A NATIONAL UNIVERSITY.



HAT a national university in this country is a thing to be desired, has always been my decided opinion.

To JOHN ADAMS, *Vice-President of the United States*, November 27, 1794. 11 *Sparks*, 1.

30. EMIGRATION.



Y opinion, with respect to emigration, is, that, except of useful mechanics, and some particular descriptions of men or professions, there is no need of encouragement; while the policy or advantage of its taking place in a body (I mean the settling of them in a body) may be much questioned; for by so

doing they retain the language, habits, and principles, good or bad, which they bring with them. Whereas, by an intermixture with our people, they or their descendants get assimilated to our customs, measures, and laws; in a word, soon become one people.

To the same, same date. 11 Sparks, 2.

31. NO INFALLIBLE GUIDES.



any power on earth could, or the Great Power above would, erect the standard of infallibility in political opinions, there is no being that inhabits this terrestrial globe that would resort to it with more eagerness than myself, so long as I remain a servant of the public. But as I have found no better guide hitherto, than upright intentions and close investigation, I shall adhere to those maxims, while I keep the watch; leaving it to those who will come after me to explore new ways, if they like, or think them better.

To HENRY KNOX, September 20, 1795. 11 Sparks, 71.

32. UTILITY OF A POTATO CROP.



all the improving and ameliorating crops, none, in my opinion, is equal to potatoes, on stiff and hard bound land, as mine is. I am satisfied, from a variety of instances, that on such land a crop of potatoes is equal to an ordinary dressing. In no instance have I failed of good wheat, oats, or clo-

ver, that followed potatoes ; and I conceive they give the soil a darker hue.

To THOMAS JEFFERSON, October 4, 1795.
12 *Sparks*, 321.

33. CABINET APPOINTMENTS.

N the appointments to the great offices of the government, my aim has been to combine geographical situation, and sometimes other considerations, with abilities and fitness of *known* characters.

To EDWARD CARRINGTON, October 9, 1795.
11 *Sparks*, 78.

34. HE FEARS NO DISCLOSURES.

OU are at full liberty to publish anything that ever passed between us, written or oral, that you think will subserve your purposes. A conscious rectitude, and an invariable endeavor to promote the honor, welfare, and happiness of this country, by every means in the power of the Executive, and within the compass of my abilities, leave no apprehension on my mind from any disclosure whatsoever.

To EDMUND RANDOLPH, October 25, 1795.
11 *Sparks*, 87.

35. HIS FOREIGN POLICY.

Y policy has been, and will continue to be, while I have the honor to remain in the administration, to maintain friendly terms with, but be independent of, all the na-

tions of the earth; to share in the broils of none; to fulfil our own engagements; to supply the wants and be carriers for them all; being thoroughly convinced that it is our policy and interest to do so. Nothing short of self-respect and that justice which is essential to a national character ought to involve us in war; for sure I am, if this country is preserved in tranquillity twenty years longer, it may bid defiance, in a just cause, to any power whatever; such, in that time, will be its population, wealth, and resources.

To GOUVERNEUR MORRIS, December 22, 1795.
11 *Sparks*, 102.

36. THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES NOT THE
TREATY-MAKING POWER.



T is perfectly clear to my understanding, that the assent of the House of Representatives is not necessary to the validity of a treaty.

Message to the House of Representatives, March 30, 1796.
12 *Sparks*, 115.

37. HE ENDEAVORS TO PROCURE THE RELEASE OF
LAFAYETTE.



T will readily occur to your Majesty, that occasions may sometimes exist, on which official considerations would constrain the chief of a nation to be silent and passive, in relation even to objects which affect his sensibility, and claim his interposition as a man. Finding myself precisely in this situation at present, I take the liberty of writing this private letter

to your Majesty, being persuaded that my motives will also be my apology for it.

In common with the people of this country, I retain a strong and cordial sense of the services rendered to them by the Marquis de Lafayette, and my friendship for him has been constant and sincere. It is natural, therefore, that I should sympathize with him and his family in their misfortunes, and endeavor to mitigate the calamities which they experience; among which, his present confinement is not the least distressing.

I forbear to enlarge on this delicate subject. Permit me only to submit to your Majesty's consideration, whether his long imprisonment, and the confiscation of his estates, and the indigence and dispersion of his family, and the painful anxieties incident to all these circumstances, do not form an assemblage of sufferings which recommend him to the mediation of humanity? Allow me, sir, on this occasion, to be its organ, and to entreat that he may be permitted to come to this country, on such conditions and under such restrictions as your Majesty may think it expedient to prescribe.

As it is a maxim with me not to ask what, under similar circumstances, I would not grant, your Majesty will do me the justice to believe that this request appears to me to correspond with those great principles of magnanimity and wisdom which form the basis of sound policy and durable glory.

To the Emperor of Germany, May 15, 1796.
11 Sparks, 125.

38. NON-INTERVENTION.



HAVE always wished well to the French revolution ; that I have always given it as my decided opinion that no nation had a right to intermeddle in the internal concerns of another ; that every one had a right to form and adopt whatever government they liked best to live under themselves ; and that, if this country could, consistently with its engagements, maintain a strict neutrality and thereby preserve peace, it was bound to do so by motives of policy, interest, and every other consideration that ought to actuate a people situated as we are, already deeply in debt, and in a convalescent state from the struggle we have been engaged in ourselves.

To JAMES MONROE, August 25, 1796. 11 *Sparks*, 164.

39. GENERAL EDUCATION.



N proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.

Farewell Address to the People of the United States,
September 17, 1796. 12 *Sparks*, 227.

40. THE PUBLIC CREDIT.



HERISH public credit. One method of preserving it is, to use it as sparingly as possible ; avoiding occasions of expense by cultivating peace, but remembering

also that timely disbursements to prepare for danger frequently prevent much greater disbursements to repel it ; avoiding likewise the accumulation of debt, not only by shunning occasions of expense, but by vigorous exertions in time of peace to discharge the debts which unavoidable wars may have occasioned, not ungenerously throwing upon posterity the burden which we ourselves ought to bear.

The same. 12 Sparks, 227.

41. NATIONAL ANTIPATHIES AND ATTACHMENTS.



THE nation which indulges towards another an habitual hatred or an habitual fondness is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest. Antipathy in one nation against another disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury, to lay hold of slight causes of umbrage, and to be haughty and intractable, when accidental or trifling occasions of dispute occur. Hence frequent collisions, obstinate, envenomed, and bloody contests. The nation, prompted by ill-will and resentment, sometimes impels to war the government, contrary to the best calculations of policy. The government sometimes participates in the national propensity, and adopts through passion what reason would reject ; at other times, it makes the animosity of the nation subservient to projects of hostility instigated by pride, ambition, and other sinister and pernicious motives. The peace often, sometimes

perhaps the liberty, of nations has been the victim.

So, likewise, a passionate attachment of one nation for another produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favorite nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest, in cases where no real common interest exists, and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels and wars of the latter, without adequate inducement or justification. It leads also to concessions to the favorite nation of privileges denied to others, which is apt doubly to injure the nation making the concessions ; by unnecessarily parting with what ought to have been retained ; and by exciting jealousy, ill-will, and a disposition to retaliate, in the parties from whom equal privileges are withheld. And it gives to ambitious, corrupted, or deluded citizens (who devote themselves to the favorite nation) facility to betray or sacrifice the interests of their own country without odium, sometimes even with popularity ; gilding, with the appearances of a virtuous sense of obligation, a commendable deference for public opinion, or a laudable zeal for public good, the base or foolish compliances of ambition, corruption, or infatuation.

As avenues to foreign influence in innumerable ways, such attachments are particularly alarming to the truly enlightened and independent patriot. How many opportunities do they afford to tamper with domestic factions, to practise the arts of seduction, to mislead public opinion, to influence or awe the public councils ! Such an attachment of a

small or weak towards a great and powerful nation dooms the former to be the satellite of the latter.

The same. 12 Sparks, 229.

42. OUR TRUE FOREIGN POLICY.



THE great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign nations, is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little *political* connection as possible.

The same. 12 Sparks, 231.

43. NATIONS GRANT NO FAVORS.



HERE can be no greater error than to expect or calculate upon real favors from nation to nation. It is an illusion which experience must cure, which a just pride ought to discard.

The same. 12 Sparks, 233.

44. A MILITARY ACADEMY.



HOWEVER pacific the general policy of a nation may be, it ought never to be without an adequate stock of military knowledge for emergencies.

Speech to both Houses of Congress, December 7, 1796.
12 Sparks, 71.

45. HIGH SERVICE SHOULD BE JUSTLY COMPENSATED.



THE compensations to the officers of the United States, in various instances, and in none more than in respect to the most important stations, appear to call for legis-

lative revision. The consequences of a defective provision are of serious import to the government. If private wealth is to supply the defect of public retribution, it will greatly contract the sphere within which the selection of characters for office is to be made, and will proportionally diminish the probability of a choice of men able as well as upright. Besides that it would be repugnant to the vital principles of our own government virtually to exclude, from public trusts, talents and virtue, unless accompanied by wealth.

The same. 12 Sparks, 72.

46. PRICE OF LAND IN VIRGINIA.



WITHIN full view of Mount Vernon, separated therefrom by water only, is one of the most beautiful seats on the river for sale, but of greater magnitude than you seem to have contemplated. It is called Belvoir, and belonged to George William Fairfax, who, were he living, would now be Baron of Cameron, as his younger brother in this country (George William dying without issue) at present is, though he does not take upon himself the title. This seat was the residence of the above-named gentleman before he went to England, and was accommodated with very good buildings, which were burnt soon after he left them. There are near two thousand acres of land belonging to the tract, surrounded in a manner by water. The mansion-house stood on high and commanding ground; the soil is not of the best quality, but a considerable

part of it, lying level, may, with proper management be profitably cultivated. There are some small tenements on the estate, but the greater part thereof is in wood. At present it belongs to Thomas Fairfax, son of Bryan Fairfax, the gentleman who will not, as I said before, take upon himself the title of Baron of Cameron. A year or two ago, the price he fixed on the land, as I have been informed, was thirty-three dollars and a third per acre.

To SIR JOHN SINCLAIR, December 11, 1796.
12 *Sparks*, 327.

47. UPON LEAVING THE PRESIDENCY.



SHOULD be very unhappy if I thought that my relinquishing the reins of government would produce any of the consequences which your fears forebode. In all free governments, contentions in elections will take place, and, whilst it is confined to our own citizens, it is not to be regretted; but severely indeed ought it to be reprobated, when occasioned by foreign machinations. I trust, however, that the good sense of our countrymen will guard the public weal against this and every other innovation, and that, although we may be a little wrong now and then, we shall return to the right path with more avidity. I can never believe that Providence, which has guided us so long and through such a labyrinth, will withdraw its protection at this crisis.

To JONATHAN TRUMBULL, March 3, 1797.
11 *Sparks*, 191.

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